

inquisitive spirit did not again suggest the question "and atoms whence?" And it is clear that however often the question "whence?" had been answered, it would still start up as at first. Nor could it suffice as an answer to say, that earth, chaos, atoms, were portions of a series of changes which went back to eternity. The preceptor of Epicurus informed him, that to be satisfied on the subject of his inquiry, he must have recourse to the philosophers. If the young speculator had been told that chaos (if chaos indeed preceded the present order) was produced by an Eternal Being, in whom resided purpose and will, he would have received a suggestion which, duly matured by subsequent contemplation, might have led him to a philosophy far more satisfactory than the material scheme can ever be, to one who looks, either abroad into the universe, or within into his own bosom.

CHAPTER IX.

Mechanical Laws.

IN the preceding observations we have supposed the laws, by which different kinds of matter act and are acted upon, to be already in existence; and have endeavoured to point out evidences of design and adaptation, displayed in the selection and arrangement of these materials of the universe. These materials are, it has appeared, supplied in such measures and disposed in such forms, that by means of their properties and laws the business of the world goes on harmoniously and beneficially. But a further question occurs: how came matter to have such properties and laws? Are these also to be considered as things of selection and institution? And if so, can we trace the reasons why the laws were established.